

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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P R 112230Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5422

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PN

SUBJECT: OCTOBER 11: TORRIJOS SPEECH

REF: PANAMA 6113

SUMMARY: OCT. 11 ANNIVERSARY SPEECHES BY HEAD OF GOVERNMENT GEN. OMAR TORRIJOS, AND PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC DEMETRIO LAKAS WERE MODERATE AND SOBER IN TONE. MAJOR POINTS OF THE TORRIJOS ADDRESS INCLUDED: CALL FOR THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE TO UNITE BEHIND GOP AND ITS REVOLUTIONARY EFFORTS, APPEAL FOR PATIENCE AND CALM WITH REGARD TO CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS, RESTATEMENT THAT A SATISFACTORY TREATY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN A RAPID CONCLUSION OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, AND FINALLY, SINGNAL & WELCOME STATEMENT THAT LABOR GAINS AND CONQUESTS OF CANAL EMPLOYEES WILL BE RESPECTED BY GOP. OCTOBER 11 CELEBRATIONS HAVE BEEN CALM, WITH NO VIOLENCE. TORRIJOS' SPEECH WAS HEARTENING AND EVIDENCE, GOP DESIRE TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATION, AS WELL AS RESPONSIVENESS TO US DOMESTIC NEEDS AND PRESSURES.

1. SPEECHES BY HEAD OF GOVERNMENT, GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS, AND PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, DEMETRIO LAKAS WERE MODERATE, SOBER  
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REPORTS ON THE STATUS OF PANAMA'S REVOLUTION AND THE PROBLEMS

IT NOW FACES. SPEECHES WERE DELIVERED BEFORE OVERFLOW CROWD AT THE NUEVO GIMNASIO PANAMA, AND FORMALLY INAUGURATED THE REGULAR ANNUAL SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF CORREGIMIENTO REPRESENTATIVES (NACR). (FBIS PANAMA 11858Z OCT 75 HAS TRANSMITTED HIGHLIGHTS OF TORRIJOS' SPEECH, FULL TEXT OF THAT SPEECH AND SPEECHES OF LAKAS, AND ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT DARIO GONZALEZ PITY WILL BE TRANSMITTED SHORTLY.) WHILE LAKAS DWELT ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PAST SEVEN YEARS, TORRIJOS FOCUSED ON THE REVOLUTIONARY "PROCESS" BASED ON THE ELECTED COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES WHO ARE BRINGING PREVIOUSLY MARGINALIZED CLASSES INTO FULL PARTICIPATION IN PANAMA'S POLITICAL LIFE. ON ECONOMICS TORRIJOS NOTED THAT PANAMA'S CURRENT DIFFICULTIES WERE SERIOUS, BUT AVERRED THE WORST WERE OVER, AND ADDED THAT PANAMA WAS BEGINNING TO PULL OUT OF ITS ECONOMIC SLUMP. HIGHLIGHTS OF TORRIJOS SPEECH FOLLOW.

2. NATIONAL UNITY. TORRIJOS EMPHASIZED AT SEVERAL POINTS IN HIS ADDRESS THAT NATIONAL UNITY IS INDISPENSIBLE IN THE FACE OF THE SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES, BOTH IN ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICY TERMS, THAT PANAMA IS NOW PASSING THROUGH. WITH THE PEOPLE UNITED BEHIND ITS REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT, THESE PROBLEMS WERE NOT INSUPERABLE AND COULD BE DEALT WITH SUCCESSFULLY; WITHOUT THIS REQUISITE UNITY, HE HELD OUT NO HOPE.

3. TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: A. NEED FOR CALM. A CALM AND TRANQUIL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS CAN PROGRESS, IN WHICH THE NEGOTIATORS CAN PURSUE THEIR TALKS, IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, TORRIJOS DECLARED. WHILE, HE STATED, THE PANAMANIAN NATION IS NEARING THE END OF ITS PATIENCE OVER THE CANAL ISSUE, PANAMANIAN MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT THEIR COUNTRY IS DEALING WITH A GREAT POWER, INDEED WITH A "COLOSSUS"; MOREOVER, A COLOSSUS THAT "SOMETIMES IS RATIONAL, SOMETIMES IRRATIONAL, THAT SOMETIMES THINKS, AND SOMETIMES DOES NOT". PRUDENCE (JUICIO) IS THEREFORE TIMELY AND IMPORTANT. FURTHERMORE, PANAMA IN HER STRUGGLE FOR "LIBERATION" FROM THE "COLONIAL PRESENCE" IS ON VIEW BEFORE A WORLDWIDE AUDIENCE. IT HAS ALREADY MADE GREAT STRIDES IN SECURING SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY, PARTICULARLY FROM ITS LATIN AMERICAN NEIGHBORS, FOR ITS STRUGGLE. EVEN THE UNITED STATES REALIZES THE WIDE SUPPORT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT PANAMA ENJOYS.

3. TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: B. SATISFACTORY TREATY MORE IMPORTANT THAN TIMING. ONCE AGAIN TORRIJOS AFFIRMED THAT A TREATY WHICH SATISFIES PANAMA'S JUST "DEMANDS", AND THAT REMOVES THE LAST "TRACES OF COLONIALISM" IS THE NATIONAL OBJECTIVE, AND THAT WHEN SUCH A TREATY IS ACHIEVED IS SECONDARY TO THAT GOAL. TORRIJOS EXCLAIMED THAT HE COULD GET A TREATY LONG BEFORE

NEXT OCT. 11, IN FACT WITHIN A FEW MONTHS, BUT SUCH A TREATY WOULD BE REJECTED BY THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE. IN A CLEAR REFERENCE TO THE US ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR, TORRIJOS STATED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS A NATION CAPABLE OF USING ITS OVERWHELMING POWER TO ENSURE THAT IT DOES NOT LOSE AN ELECTION.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAB-01

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4. TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: C. BASES AND DURATION. TORRIJOS DECLARED THAT PANAMA IS NOT NEGOTIATING ON US MILITARY BASES IN THE CANAL ZONE, RATHER IT IS NEGOTIATING A CALENDAR THROUGH WHICH THOSE BASES WILL BE DISMANTLED. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE US MILITARY IN THE CANAL ZONE WAS FORMIDABLE, NOT FICTIONAL, AND HENCE HAD TO BE CAREFULLY, IF FIRMLY HANDLED. ON DURATION TORRIJOS' ONLY COMMENT WAS TO REPEAT THAT 100 YEARS OF A "COLONIAL" PRESENCE WAS ENOUGH, AND SUCH A PRESENCE BEYOND THE CENTURY WOULD BE INACCEPTABLE.

5. PANAMA CANAL EMPLOYEES. IN SIGNAL POSITION AT HIS SPEECH'S CLOSING TORRIJOS GAVE ASSURANCE TO CANAL EMPLOYEES. BEGIN QUOTE: "TO THE U.S. WORKERS WHOSE WORK, TOGETHER WITH THAT OF THE PANAMANIAN WORKERS, MAKES THE CANAL OPERATION AN EFFICIENT, CONTINUOUS AND CONSTANT ONE, I WOULD LIKE TO VOICE A CHALLENGE HERE. FOR THOSE WORKERS WHO WANT THEIR LABOR GAINS TO BE RESPECTED, GAINS THAT HAVE BEEN OBTAINED THROUGH MANY YEARS

OF STRUGGLE, THE GOVERNMENT AND OUR COUNTRY IS WILLING TO RESPECT THEM BECAUSE THIS GOVERNMENT IS NOT CHARACTERIZED BY NEGATING LABOR CONQUESTS OF ANY GROUP OF WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY." BUT WITH THOSE WORKERS, CONTINUED TORRIJOS, WHO MAINTAIN THAT A FOREIGN JURISDICTION IS REQUIRED TO CONSERVE THOSE GAINS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PANAMA CANNOT EVEN HOLD A DIALOGUE, AND IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THEM TO START TO LEAVE.

6. CELEBRATIONS OF THE OCTOBER 11 HOLIDAY HAVE BEEN QUIET. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO REPORTS OF ANY VIOLENCE ANYWHERE IN PANAMA. HAPPILY, FIREWORKS HAVE BEEN SHOT OFF ONLY FOR POPULAR PLEASURE.

7. COMMENT. TORRIJOS RESISTED ANY TEMPTATION HE MIGHT HAVE HAD TO DEMAGOGUERY. HE DELIVERED HIS SPEECH IN A SERIOUS AND CALM MANNER. HE STATED SQUARELY THAT PANAMA CONFRONTS SERIOUS PROBLEMS, BUT HELD OUT HOPE THAT THEY CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVED, AS LONG AS THE PEOPLE REMAIN UNITED AND CONSCIOUS OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THEIR NATION'S PROBLEMS. HIS CALL FOR PATIENCE WITH THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, AND CALM SO THAT PANAMA'S NEGOTIATORS COULD DO THEIR JOBS, IS GOOD NEWS FOR NEGOTIATORS ON BOTH SIDES. HIS EMPHASIS ON A GOOD TREATY-THE TREATY, NOT ANY TREATY, HE STATED AT ONE POINT-AND REJECTION OF HASTE IN NEGOTIATION IS VERY HELPFUL FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW. THAT PLUS HIS REFERENCE TO THE NOVEMBER 1976 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE US WAS INTENDED TO PREPARE PANAMANIAN FOR NEGOTIATIONS EXTENDING THROUGH NEXT YEAR.

EXTREMELY HEARTENING AND SIGNIFICANT WAS TORRIJOS REFERENCE TO CANAL EMPLOYEES. IT GAVE CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE UNITED STATES IN REDUCING TENSION AND ALLAYING SOME FEARS OF AMERICANS IN THE CANAL ZONE. HIS COMMENTS DREW SUBSTANTIALLY ON SUGGESTED STATEMENTS PREPARED FOR HIM BY DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR BELL (SEE REFTEL). TORRIJOS' COMMENTS WILL BE PUT TO GOOD USE BY THE NEGOTIATORS AND ALSO BY THE EMBASSY'S LIASON EFFORTS WITH CANAL ZONE GROUPS.

IN SUM, EMBASSY REGARDS TORRIJOS SPEECH AS SENSITIVE BOTH TO PANAMANIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS AND THOSE OF THE US.

JORDEN

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